

Message Text

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60

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAB-01 ACDA-05 INT-05 EB-07 FEA-01

COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIEP-01 /097 W

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R 171602Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7976

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 0341

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG, SY, TS

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTI:
MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

REF: RABAT 0244 (NOTAL)

1. DURING MY LATE EVENING MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTI JANUARY 16 HE, AS IN CASE OF MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI (REFTEL), EXPRESSED CONCERN AT SECRETARY'S STATEMENT IN BUSINESS WEEK INTERVIEW, AS WELL AS SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY SCHLESINGER RE USG USE
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OF FORCE TO OCCUPY OIL FIELDS IN EXTREMIS SITUATION.

KNOWING THE SECRETARY'S COMMITMENT TO PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND HIS MONUMENTAL EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE AN ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT, CHATTI SAID THAT HE COULD ONLY CONCLUDE THAT SECRETARY'S REMARK WAS A CONSIDERED ONE DESIGNED ESSENTIALLY FOR INTERNAL PUBLIC CONSUMPTION. WHILE EFFECT OF REMARK ON ARAB WORLD HAS BEEN DESTABILIZING, HE COULD APPRECIATE THAT, AT TIME WHEN USG EVIDENTLY PRESSING ISRAEL HARD RE MAKING CONCESSIONS IN CONNECTION NEXT STEP IN SINAI DIS-ENGAGEMENT, USG MIGHT HAVE FELT IT NECESSARY TO MAKE "BALANCING STATEMENT." CHATTI SAID THAT AT "DINNER-DEBATE" WITH PRESS PREVIOUS EVENING HE HAD SOUGHT TO PUT SECRETARY'S STATEMENT IN PERSPECTIVE.

2. I STRESSED TO CHATTI THAT SECRETARY HAD RESPONDED TO A HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION IN A VERY QUALIFIED MANNER. SECRETARY HAD EMPHASIZED THAT SUCH TYPE ACTIONS IN THE PAST HAD PROVEN UNAVAILING. REFERENCE TO POSSIBLE USE OF FORCE WAS WITH REGARD TO AN EXTREMIS AND HIGHLY UNLIKELY SITUATION.

3. CHATTI EXPRESSED OPTIMISM CONCERNING SECRETARY'S CURRENT EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE NEXT PHASE OF SINAI WITHDRAWAL. HE BELIEVED THAT SECRETARY WOULD SUCCEED IN INDUCING ISRAEL TO GIVE UP ABU RODEIS OIL FIELD AND THE TWO MOUNTAIN PASSES IN CONTEXT SECOND-STEP DISENGAGEMENT PROVIDED ISRAEL COULD OBTAIN SOMETHING SATISFACTORY FROM EGYPT IN RESPONSE. HE SAID ISRAEL OBVIOUSLY HAD TO SEE SOMETHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BALANCE SHEET. AT THE SAME TIME, SADAT IS VERY MUCH ON THE SPOT AND HAS TO BE CAREFUL WITH REGARD TO ANY POLITICAL UNDERTAKINGS HE MIGHT MAKE VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL. CHATTI CHARACTERIZED CURRENT NEGOTIATING EFFORT AS "LAST CHANCE" FOR SADAT. IF SECOND DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT NOT ACHIEVED OVER COMING WEEKS, CHATTI THOUGHT SADAT'S CHANCES FOR SURVIVAL WOULD BE SERIOUSLY IMPAIRED.

4. CHATTI CHARACTERIZED JUNE AS A CRITICAL MONTH SINCE ABSENCE OF ANY PROGRESS BY THAT TIME WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY MEAN THAT SYRIA WOULD NOT RPT NOT RESUME UNEF GOLAN MANDATE. HE ALLUDED TO SYRIA'S CONCERN AT PROSPECT OF SADAT'S UNDERTAKING UNILATERAL DISENGAGEMENT, BUT SEEMED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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FEEL THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE.
SEELYE

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